

In re Patent Application of:  
BRUNA ET AL.  
Serial No. 09/902,439  
Filing Date: JULY 10, 2001

In the Claims:

Claims 1 to 15 (Canceled).

16. (Currently Amended) A method for compressing a digital image comprising a matrix of elements, each element comprising a plurality of digital components of different types for representing a pixel, the method comprising:

determining at least one energy measure of the digital image;

estimating a gain factor as a function of the at least one energy measure, the function being determined experimentally according to a target compression factor;

splitting the digital image into a plurality of blocks, and calculating for each block a group of discrete cosine transform (DCT) coefficients for the digital components of different types, each group of DCT coefficients comprising at least one direct current (DC) coefficient and a plurality of alternating current (AC) coefficients; and

quantizing the DCT coefficients for each block using a corresponding quantization table scaled by the gain factor for achieving the target compression factor;

wherein determining the at least one energy measure comprising receiving the plurality of digital components, and calculating the at least one energy measure in a pixel domain using the plurality of digital components;

wherein estimating the gain factor comprises

estimating a first number of bits required to encode the AC coefficients of all the blocks using the quantization tables scaled by a pre-set factor as a first function of the at least one energy measure, the first function being determined

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experimentally according to the target compression factor,

calculating a second number of bits required to encode the DC coefficients of all the blocks using the quantization tables scaled by the pre-set factor,

estimating a basic compression factor provided by the quantization tables scaled by the pre-set factor according to the first number of bits and the second number of bits, and

estimating the gain factor as a second function of the basic compression factor, the second function being determined experimentally according to the target compression factor.

17. (Canceled).

18. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 16 17, wherein the first function is a linear function and the second function is a quadratic function.

19. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 16 17, wherein estimating the basic compression factor comprises:

estimating a third number of bits required to encode control values according to a number of elements of the digital image; and

dividing a sum of the first, second and third number of bits by the number of elements of the digital image.

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20. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 16 ~~47~~, further comprising:

storing a plurality of sets of parameters representing the second function, each set of parameters being associated with a corresponding value of the target compression factor;

selecting an image quality and determining a current value of the target compression factor as a function of the selected image quality; and

reading the parameters associated with the current value of the target compression factor for estimating the gain factor.

21. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 16 ~~47~~, wherein the pre-set factor is determined experimentally according to the target compression factor.

22. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 16, wherein each element of the digital image comprises a luminance component, a first chrominance component, and a second chrominance component.

23. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 22, wherein the at least one energy measure comprises a total energy measure equal to a sum of an energy measure of the luminance components, an energy measure of the first chrominance components and an energy measure of the second chrominance components.

24. (Previously Presented) A method according to

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Claim 23, wherein determining the at least one energy measure for each type of component comprises:

calculating a horizontal Sobel image and a vertical Sobel image by a convolution of the elements of the digital image comprising a type of component with a horizontal mask and a vertical mask, respectively;

calculating a total Sobel image by summing the horizontal Sobel image and the vertical Sobel image; and

summing an absolute value of each element of the total Sobel image.

25. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 24, wherein at least one quantization table is asymmetric along a horizontal direction and a vertical direction, the method further comprising multiplying the Sobel image associated with the at least one quantization table by a correction factor for compensating the asymmetry of the corresponding quantization table.

26. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 16, further comprising:

providing an incomplete digital image with at least one component missing in each element;

obtaining the digital image from the incomplete digital image;

storing the digital image in a memory and concurrently performing the determining of the at least one energy measure and the estimating of the gain factor; and

reading the digital image from the memory for performing the splitting of the digital image and the

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quantizing of the DCT coefficients.

27. (Previously Presented) A method according to  
Claim 16, further comprising:

providing an incomplete digital image with at least  
one component missing in each element;

obtaining the digital image from the incomplete  
digital image for performing the determining of the at least  
one energy measure and the estimating of the gain factor; and

obtaining the digital image from the incomplete  
digital image again for performing the splitting of the  
digital image and the quantizing of the DCT coefficients.

28. (Previously Presented) A method for compressing  
a digital image comprising a matrix of elements, each element  
comprising a plurality of digital components of different  
types for representing a pixel, the method comprising:

determining at least one energy measure of the  
digital image;

estimating a gain factor as a function of the at  
least one energy measure by

estimating a first number of bits required  
to encode the AC coefficients of all the blocks  
using the quantization tables scaled by a pre-set  
factor as a first function of the at least one  
energy measure,

calculating a second number of bits  
required to encode the DC coefficients of all the  
blocks using the quantization tables scaled by the  
pre-set factor,

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estimating a basic compression factor provided by the quantization tables scaled by the pre-set factor according to the first number of bits and the second number of bits, and

estimating the gain factor as a second function of the basic compression factor;

splitting the digital image into a plurality of blocks, and calculating for each block a group of discrete cosine transform (DCT) coefficients for the digital components of different types, each group of DCT coefficients comprising at least one direct current (DC) coefficient and a plurality of alternating current (AC) coefficients; and

quantizing the DCT coefficients for each block using a corresponding quantization table scaled by the gain factor for determining a target compression factor;

wherein determining the at least one energy measure is performed in a pixel domain using the plurality of digital components.

29. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 28, wherein the first and second functions are determined experimentally according to the target compression factor.

30. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 28, wherein the first function is a linear function and the second function is a quadratic function.

31. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 28, wherein estimating the basic compression factor

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comprises:

estimating a third number of bits required to encode control values according to a number of elements of the digital image; and

dividing a sum of the first, second and third number of bits by the number of elements of the digital image.

32. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 28, wherein each element of the digital image comprises a luminance component, a first chrominance component, and a second chrominance component.

33. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 32, wherein the at least one energy measure comprises a total energy measure equal to a sum of an energy measure of the luminance components, an energy measure of the first chrominance components and an energy measure of the second chrominance components.

34. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 33, wherein determining the at least one energy measure for each type of component comprises:

calculating a horizontal Sobel image and a vertical Sobel image by a convolution of the elements of the digital image comprising a type of component with a horizontal mask and a vertical mask, respectively;

calculating a total Sobel image by summing the horizontal Sobel image and the vertical Sobel image; and

summing an absolute value of each element of the total Sobel image.

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35. (Currently amended) A device for compressing a digital image comprising a matrix of elements, each element comprising a plurality of digital components of different types for representing a pixel, the device comprising:

energy means for determining at least one energy measure of the digital image;

estimation means for estimating the a gain factor as a function of the at least one energy measure, the function being determined experimentally according to the target compression factor;

discrete cosine transform (DCT) means for splitting the digital image into a plurality of blocks, and calculating for each block a group of coefficients for the digital components of different types, each group of DCT coefficients comprising at least one direct current (DC) coefficient and a plurality of alternating current (AC) coefficients;

quantization means connected to said DCT means for quantizing the DCT coefficients for each block using a corresponding quantization table scaled by the gain factor for achieving a target compression factor;

said energy means determining the at least one energy measure in a pixel domain using the plurality of digital components;

wherein said estimation means is for  
estimating a first number of bits required to  
encode the AC coefficients of all the blocks using  
the quantization tables scaled by a pre-set factor  
as a first function of the at least one energy

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measure, the first function being determined experimentally according to the target compression factor,

calculating a second number of bits required to encode the DC coefficients of all the blocks using the quantization tables scaled by the pre-set factor,

estimating a basic compression factor provided by the quantization tables scaled by the pre-set factor according to the first number of bits and the second number of bits, and

estimating the gain factor as a second function of the basic compression factor, the second function being determined experimentally according to the target compression factor.

36. (Previously Presented) A device according to Claim 35, wherein said DCT means and said quantization means define a compression unit; wherein said estimation means comprises a processor for controlling compression of the digital image; the device further comprising:

a memory for storing the quantization tables; and communication means for connecting said compression unit, said memory, said energy means and said processor together, said processor estimating the gain factor based upon a program stored in said memory.

37. (Canceled).

38. (Currently Amended) A device according to Claim

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35 37, wherein the first function is a linear function and the second function is a quadratic function.

39. (Currently Amended) A device according to Claim 35 37, wherein said estimation means for estimating the basic compression factor is further for:

estimating a third number of bits required to encode control values according to a number of elements of the digital image; and

dividing a sum of the first, second and third number of bits by the number of elements of the digital image.

40. (Previously Presented) A device according to Claim 35, wherein each element of the digital image comprises a luminance component, a first chrominance component, and a second chrominance component.

41. (Previously Presented) A device according to Claim 40, wherein the at least one energy measure comprises a total energy measure equal to a sum of an energy measure of the luminance components, an energy measure of the first chrominance components and an energy measure of the second chrominance components.

42. (Previously Presented) A device according to Claim 41, wherein said energy means is for:

calculating a horizontal Sobel image and a vertical Sobel image by a convolution of the elements of the digital image comprising a type of component with a horizontal mask and a vertical mask, respectively;

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calculating a total Sobel image by summing the horizontal Sobel image and the vertical Sobel image; and summing an absolute value of each element of the total Sobel image.

43. (Currently Amended) A digital still camera comprising:

an image acquisition unit for transmitting light corresponding to an image of scene;

a sensor unit connected to said image acquisition unit for providing a digital image of scene, the digital image comprising a matrix of elements, each element comprising a plurality of digital components of different types for representing a pixel; and

a control device for compressing the digital image and comprising

a discrete cosine transform (DCT) circuit for splitting the digital image into a plurality of blocks, and calculating for each block a group of discrete cosine transform (DCT) coefficients for the digital components of different types, each group of DCT coefficients comprising at least one DC coefficient and a plurality of AC coefficients.

a quantization circuit connected to said DCT circuit for quantizing the DCT coefficients for each block using a corresponding quantization table scaled by a gain factor for achieving a target compression factor,

an energy circuit for determining at least one energy measure of the digital image, and

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a processor for estimating the gain factor as a function of the at least one energy measure, the function being determined experimentally according to the target compression factor,

said processor

estimating a first number of bits required to encode the AC coefficients of all the blocks using the quantization tables scaled by a pre-set factor as a first function of the at least one energy measure, the first function being determined experimentally according to the target compression factor;

calculating a second number of bits required to encode the DC coefficients of all the blocks using the quantization tables scaled by the pre-set factor;

estimating a basic compression factor provided by the quantization tables scaled by the pre-set factor according to the first number of bits and the second number of bits; and

estimating the gain factor as a second function of the basic compression factor, the second function being determined experimentally according to the target compression factor.

44. (Previously Presented) A digital still camera according to Claim 43, wherein said DCT circuit and said quantization circuit define a compression unit; the device further comprising:

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a memory for storing the quantization tables; and  
a communication bus for connecting said compression  
unit, said memory, said energy circuit and said processor  
together, said processor estimating the gain factor based upon  
a program stored in said memory.

45. (Canceled).

46. (Currently Amended) A digital still camera  
according to Claim 43 45, wherein the first function is a  
linear function and the second function is a quadratic  
function.

47. (Currently Amended) A digital still camera  
according to Claim 43 45, wherein said estimation circuit for  
estimating the basic compression factor is further for:  
estimating a third number of bits required to encode  
control values according to a number of elements of the  
digital image; and  
dividing a sum of the first, second and third number  
of bits by the number of elements of the digital image.

48. (Previously Presented) A digital still camera  
according to Claim 43, wherein each element of the digital  
image comprises a luminance component, a first chrominance  
component, and a second chrominance component.

49. (Previously Presented) A digital still camera  
according to Claim 48, wherein the at least one energy measure  
comprises a total energy measure equal to a sum of an energy

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measure of the luminance components, an energy measure of the first chrominance components and an energy measure of the second chrominance components.

50. (Previously Presented) A digital still camera according to Claim 49, wherein said energy circuit is for:

calculating a horizontal Sobel image and a vertical Sobel image by a convolution of the elements of the digital image comprising a type of component with a horizontal mask and a vertical mask, respectively;

calculating a total Sobel image by summing the horizontal Sobel image and the vertical Sobel image; and

summing an absolute value of each element of the total Sobel image.